



# NEWS

FROM THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



## Fish and Wildlife Service

For Immediate Release:  
September 11, 1996

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### TAIWAN HELPS PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES; INTERIOR SECRETARY REMOVES CERTIFICATION

Calling it "the end of an historic first chapter in the protection of globally important endangered species," Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt today officially lifted the certification of Taiwan under the Pelly Amendment.

"We have achieved the outcome we had hoped for in 1994 when President Clinton, for the first time in history, imposed trade sanctions on Taiwan under the Pelly Amendment," Secretary Babbitt said. "These actions have proven effective, and we can now welcome Taiwan into the world community of those fighting to halt illegal trade in rhino and tiger parts."

"I am tremendously pleased with the concrete success we have been able to achieve in a relatively short period of time in combating illegal trade in rhino horn and tiger parts in Taiwan, Charlene Barshefsky, Acting U.S. Trade Representative said. "This success is due, in no small part, to the commitment this Administration has demonstrated to ensuring that our trade policies and our environmental policies are mutually supportive."

Taiwan was certified under the Pelly Amendment to the Fisherman's Protective Act of 1967 in September, 1993, following a determination that its trade in rhino horn and tiger parts and products was causing significant harm to efforts by the international community to protect these endangered species. Although others have been certified before, President Clinton used his authority under the amendment to invoke trade sanctions against Taiwan.

"This is an excellent example of how properly designed trade measures can be an effective tool in enforcing international environmental agreements," Eileen Claussen, Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International, Environmental and Scientific Affairs said.

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"Today, I am pleased to report that we now know trade sanctions imposed on behalf of endangered species work," Babbitt said. "Thanks to the President's decisive move, Taiwan has now taken a number of steps to become part of an international effort to save these magnificent creatures from an irreversible and tragic loss."

The Pelly Amendment had been augmented in 1978 to allow trade sanctions to be imposed if the United States determined that foreign nationals were, "... engaging in trade or taking which diminishes the effectiveness of any international program for endangered or threatened species whether or not such conduct is legal under the laws of the offending country." The United States, along with 131 countries, is a party to CITES, the international environmental treaty that deals with international trade in protected species.

In 1992 and 1993, the CITES Standing Committee, which acts on behalf of the treaty, called for direct actions regarding illegal trade in rhino horns and tiger parts and products. At its 1993 meeting, the Committee unanimously recommended that parties to the Convention consider implementing "... stricter domestic measures up to and including prohibition in trade in wildlife species..." against Taiwan for its trade in rhino and tiger parts and products. Taiwan was certified under the Pelly Amendment in 1993 for undermining the effectiveness of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

"President Clinton agreed with the Standing Committee's recommendations, and chose to show the global community that our country takes international conservation issues seriously," Babbitt explained. "In April 1994, in an unprecedented action by a U.S. President, he took a risk and imposed trade sanctions to help save endangered species." Specifically, the sanctions banned the importation of fish or wildlife products from Taiwan into the United States.

Since these sanctions were imposed, relevant authorities in the United States and Taiwan have signed the Agreement on Technical Cooperation in Conservation of Flora and Fauna that includes the following elements: law enforcement cooperation, management of stocks of endangered species products, cooperation and exchange of information regarding wildlife forensics, training, communication on permits, and an exchange of information on public education and outreach. The U.S. Departments of Interior, Justice, and State have sent experts to Taiwan to meet and consult with their counterparts on these issues.

In June, 1995, President Clinton removed the trade sanctions. At the same time, he directed Secretary Babbitt to continue to monitor Taiwan's progress in implementing its recently amended Wildlife Conservation Law. President Clinton also directed Babbitt to report back to him within one year on Taiwan's efforts to strengthen enforcement activities and on the success of its new public education and outreach program.

A highly successful training program was provided by U.S. experts in Taiwan last year, involving numerous aspects of CITES-related implementation and law enforcement appropriate to the situation in Taiwan. Because of this cooperation, Taiwan now has made significant progress in enforcing its Wildlife Conservation Law. Stepped-up law enforcement combined with a highly successful education and public outreach campaign (much of which addressed the use of wildlife products in traditional Asian medicines) have led to a marked absence of rhino and tiger parts and products in Taiwan's shops and markets. In addition, Taiwan has taken an example from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's world-class forensic laboratory and established one of its own. Also, to demonstrate it is ready to fully participate as a member of the world's environmental community, Taiwan authorities have made several monetary contributions to support rhino and tiger conservation programs around the world, including in countries where rhinos and tigers remain in the wild.

"This is an exciting moment for all who have worked so hard on behalf of these species," Babbitt said. "However, there is still much to be done before we can rest easy that future generations will be able to see and appreciate rhinos and tigers in the wild. Unfortunately there are many countries where these beautiful animals remain more valuable dead than alive."

Rhinos and tigers are critically endangered. At latest count, there were fewer than 10,000 rhinos and approximately 5,000 tigers left in the wild. Unless the worldwide trade in their parts and products is eliminated, wild rhinos and tigers could be extinct by the start of the new century.

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